

Dynamic Articulations

Auto-Positioning Dynamics for Finale 2000

including other custom symbols

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The Problem

Finale has powerful functions to automatically position Articulations like dots, trills etc in the score - just click the note and the symbol will be placed at the correct position.

Unfortunately these auto-positioning features are only available for articulations, and not for expressions, making the positioning of dynamics quite a time consuming process.

For a long time I added dynamics as expressions, carefully positioning them afterwards, always wondering whether there was a better way to do it. There is.

The Solution

I discovered that it is possible to define dynamics (*f*, *p* etc.) as articulations, and make them position themselves very accurately. This library is just that: a collection of all of Finale's dynamic symbols in three different sizes, adjusted so they position themselves. Together with Finale's metatools entering dynamics becomes a one-click operation; very rarely adjustments have to be made.

There are a few disadvantages to this approach. The playback functions are very limited, as articulations can only influence playback of the note they are attached to. In practice this means that *f* or *p* type dynamics will not play back at all. Only accents like *sfz* can be made to play back.

Also, since the placement of the dynamics is dependent on the notes they are attached to, they might not look very good for music with more or less continuous dynamic markings, as often found in contemporary music. For this it is usually better to place all dynamics at the same distance from the staff - this library makes no attempt to do so.

The dynamics in this library use the default font in Finale, and they are adjusted for the Maestro font. They might also work with other fonts like Petrucci or Engraver, but their placement will not be accurate.

The placement is adjusted as the best compromise between centering underneath the note and not colliding with a barline before the note. The latter is only a problem with the longer combinations like *pppp*.

The symbols were adjusted by comparing the placement to published scores. In most situations the placement should work without manual adjustments. Only if long dynamics are to be attached to notes immediately before the barline, they will probably have to be moved to the left (using the arrow keys immediately after entry), to avoid collisions.

However, if they are used on notes which have other articulations (like >) underneath them, it might be necessary to move the dynamics further away from the note - which can easily be done with the arrow-keys immediately after entering.

The library has all dynamic symbols provided by the Maestro font in three different sizes, 24pt, 20pt and 16pt. 24pt is the standard size for the Finales music font, but I find the symbols too large to be used at that size. I prefer them at 20pt, and use the 16pt symbols for editorial additions. Your mileage may be different.

I also included a custom symbol (*pf*, a common dynamic in the 18th century, translated by Reichardt as *più forte*, by others sometimes as *poco forte*) at 20pt. It is the last symbol in the library. The main purpose of this symbol is to show that it is possible to create custom symbols using the shape designer. Experiment yourself if you need your own dynamics. You will notice that it looks smaller than the other 20pt symbols. This is because it had been designed as a shape, not as a font based symbol. If you use it you will see that it is in fact the same size as the other 20pt symbols.

More Articulations

I have also added a few custom symbols to the library, which I created for my needs, they might be useful to others, too.

1) Dagger similar to the ones used by Henle or Bärenreiter, auto-positioning to their standards.

2) Dot which positions on the stem side of the note (for polyphonic parts).

3) Double bracket (()) for use on single dots. It automatically positions itself around the standard dot.

4) and 5) Left and right brackets for bracketing several dots.

6), 7) and 8) are the same type brackets for use on the dagger (No. 1).

Unfortunately the brackets are very hard to identify in the library (too small), but you can check them in the score.

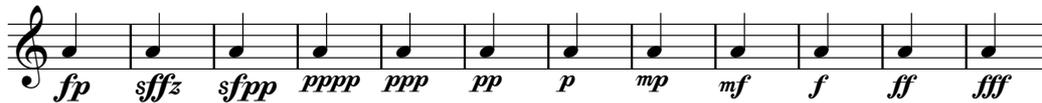
How to use this Library

Place the library File in your Finale libraries folder. Select "Open Library" and find the file "Dynamic Articulations", open it. The library gets appended to your existing articulations library.

You will probably want to define metatools for the dynamics you use most often. Look up Finale's documentation on how to do this.

You can open the library in you default file and save the default file again, if you want to use it in all your new files.

That's it. If your demands are like mine you can probably save quite a lot of time with this library.



Disclaimer

This library is Freeware. You can do whatever you like with it, change it, extend it or trash it. However, you are not allowed to sell it.

I take no responsibility for any problems that might occur with this file. It should be problem free, and not disturb anything on your computer, but to be sure save your work before you use it.

If you like it, have more ideas on the subject, can add more symbols or simply want to congratulate me on my genius, write me an email.

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